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ABSTRACT

This study examined the characteristics and developmental patterns of National/State Teacher of the Year (NSTOY) honorees, through analysis of 196 honorees' responses on "The Great American Success Quotient Test." Results are analyzed in terms of personal characteristics or traits, experiences in chosen field, academic experience, interests outside of school, and family environment and influence. Results suggest that subjects tended to attribute their success to caring about others, hard work, organizational ability, and their ability to get things done. Other factors which respondents identified as highly significant in contributing to their success included risk taking and common sense. Respondents rated their ability to make money the lowest of the 20 areas on the questionnaire. Results are compared with results of a 1988 study by R. A. Jensen titled "Iowa's Young Leaders: Characteristics, Organizational Environments, and Career Orientations." The paper concludes that there are far more commonalities than differences between the responses of NSTOY designees and the responses of participants in the 1988 study, very few of whom were teachers. (JDD)

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Factors Which Effective Teachers Identify as Contributing to Their Success

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Running head: FACTORS WHICH EFFECTIVE TEACHERS IDENTIFY

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Abstract

This study examined the characteristics and developmental patterns of National/State Teacher of the Year honorees. Data were collected by means of a mailed survey. The number of respondents totaled 196 and included 150 females and 45 males (one case of missing data), whose average age at the time of the study was 56.6 years. Research results suggest that the subjects tended to attribute their success to caring about others, hard work, organizational ability, and their ability to get things done. Other factors which respondents identified as highly significant in contributing to their success include risk taking and common sense.

INTRODUCTION

Success attracts attention. The general public acknowledges the accomplishments of the successful, perhaps wondering exactly what brings these people their success or what they have that others do not. Success also attracts the attention of researchers interested in studying the characteristics and developmental patterns of high achieving individuals. The theoretical framework for the study which serves as the focus of this paper originates with the work of some of those researchers.

Theoretical Framework

Charles Garfield (1986), a mathematician and psychologist, studies successful, high achieving individuals, people he refers to as peak performers. Garfield began his research by asking chief executive officers and senior managers to name the most outstanding leaders in their fields. He then conducted lengthy interviews with the 310 individuals whose names were cited most often. As a result of those interviews, Garfield pinpointed characteristics which he concluded all peak performers share. He went on to proclaim that "...the difference between peak performers and 'everybody else' is much smaller than 'everybody else' thinks" (Trubo, 1983, p. 56), and that the skills and attributes of peak performance can be learned.

Gallup and Gallup (1986) also studied peak performers, albeit with different terminology and with different definitions than those Garfield employed, and also concluded that success is not necessarily attributable to mystical qualities or supernatural abilities. Based on their survey of Marquis' Who's Who in America designees, Gallup and Gallup pinpointed twelve general traits that regularly recur among top achievers. They contend that when these traits are considered as a whole they constitute the closest thing to a success personality which they can find. Gallup and Gallup's findings, along with those of Garfield, reveal that the answer to the question of what high achievers have that others do not is "very little."

Need for the Study

Building on the work of Garfield (1986) and Gallup and Gallup (1986), in a 1988 study, Jensen surveyed young adults who had been recognized as being successful and outstanding in their chosen careers. One purpose of that research was to identify the variables which respondents felt contributed to their success. However, neither Garfield's research nor Gallup and Gallup's focused on teachers, and Jensen's 1988 respondents included only a few teachers. Consequently, the authors of this paper saw a need for research which applied

the results and methodology of previous studies dealing with peak performers to a study that focused on educators.

Purpose of the Study

As teacher educators, the authors of this paper were interested in studying teachers who have been honored for their outstanding contributions to the field of education. Four questions served to guide the course of the research:

(1) What characteristics do effective teachers share?

(2) What developmental patterns do effective teachers share?

(3) What factors do effective teachers identify as contributing to their success?

(4) How can profiles of effective teachers be utilized in preparing future teachers?

Consequently, the main objective of this study was to pose these questions and to offer plausible responses to them. If the success of current teachers can somehow be replicated in a predictable and reliable manner, certainly these questions would merit further research.

A secondary purpose of the study was to compare the results of this research with those of Jensen's 1988 study. Both studies utilized Gallup and Gallup's "The Great American Success Quotient Test," but, while the current study's respondents were teachers who have been recognized as outstanding, the respondents in Jensen's study were young

adults recognized for their success in a wide variety of fields. Consequently, the results of the two studies, when viewed together, afford a comparison between the characteristics and developmental patterns of outstanding teachers and those of successful individuals from other fields.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The subject pool used for this study was the intact group consisting of 390 members of the National/State Teachers of the Year (NSTOY). These individuals all have been honored by their respective states as Teachers of the Year, dating back to at least 1957. The nomination process begins at the local level, where teachers are nominated by their colleagues. The nominations then proceed to the county or parish level competition, with winners moving on to the regional, state, and national competitions. For each nominee, election committees consider letters of support, background sketches, descriptions of teaching positions, and other pertinent information provided by nominees.

Since the inception of NSTOY, over 900 teachers have been recipients of its awards. Of that number, the names of 390 appear on the active member mailing list. It is those

individuals who served as subjects for the study this paper describes.

Materials

With the copyright holder's permission, this study utilized Gallup and Gallup's "The Great American Success Quotient Test" (1986), which asks respondents to indicate to what degree several factors contributed to their success. It was used to gather information regarding subjects' characteristics, abilities, and personal development patterns--variables which determine, to some extent, how well individuals meet established job requirements.

Procedures

In order to conduct this study, the authors first wrote a research proposal which they submitted to the National/ State Teachers of the Year Board of Directors, who approved the study. Subsequent to receiving permission to conduct the study, the authors were provided with a copy of the NSTOY mailing directory.

Along with a brief demographics form and an organizational environment survey, the Gallup and Gallup questionnaire was then mailed in booklet form to 390 potential NSTOY respondents. One hundred ninety-six NSTOY honorees completed and returned the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 50.26%.

Data Analyses

After completed surveys were returned, the data were coded, entered into computer files, and analyzed with the use of The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Means and standard deviations for each variable were calculated, as were subscale reliabilities. In addition, results were compared to Jensen's 1988 study, which also utilized Gallup and Gallup's "The Great American Success Quotient Test."

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics and developmental patterns which National/ State Teachers of the Year (NSTOY) designees share. Data pertaining to these two areas follow.

Characteristics

Of the 196 people who completed the survey, 150 are female and 45 are male (one case of missing data). Their mean age at the time of the study was 56.6 years, and 93.9% of them are Caucasian. Of those responding, 6.6% hold bachelor's degrees, 6.6% have bachelor's degrees plus additional hours, 50.8% hold master's degrees, 19.4% have master's degrees plus additional hours, and 6.6% hold doctorates.

Factors Which Effective Teachers Identify

As a group, NSTOY respondents have taught an average of 25.50 years, 43.4% of them in the seventh through twelfth grades, and 35.2% in kindergarten through the sixth grades. Currently, 38.8% of them hold pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade teaching positions, 34.7% are retired, and 4.6% teach in post-secondary settings. Of the 21.4% holding non-teaching positions, all but 2.0% are still involved in education--either as administrators, consultants, student teacher supervisors, specialists, or guidance counselors.

On Gallup and Gallup's "The Great American Success Quotient Test," respondents evaluated themselves in 20 different areas by indicating the grade they thought they deserved on each variable. Their ratings were converted to a zero to ten measure, with zero equalling "F" and ten equalling "A." Participants' assessments of their skills and proficiencies reflect that, as a group, NSTOY designees rated themselves highest in their ability to get things done, while rating their ability to make money the lowest of the twenty. With the exception of specialized knowledge required in their field, which ranked second, the majority of the items with higher ratings tended to be characteristics and abilities which feature the affective components of attitudes, motivation, and emotions.

The general intelligence and self-confidence ratings rank sixteenth and seventeenth respectively, with ratings for skills, such as conversational ability, writing, reading, and public speaking, also appearing in the lower half of the rankings. However, it should be noted that respondents rated themselves in the "A" range on all but one of the twenty items. The only "B" item is the ability to make money.

Table 1 provides the specific ratings of each of the 20 items, beginning with the highest ranked item and continuing through the lowest ranked item. Item means and standard deviations also are reported. Table 2 indicates how accurately respondents felt eleven different statements dealing with personal characteristics described them. Again the statements are ranked, and means and standard deviations are reflected.

Developmental Patterns

Childhood

Almost 89% of the respondents indicated that their childhoods were either fairly happy or very happy. A pattern begins to develop when that statistic is viewed in conjunction with respondents' perceptions of their childhood relationships with their parents. While 87.8% of those responding revealed that they got along with their fathers

Table 1. Self-appraisal subscale: Ratings, means, and standard deviations

Characteristic	Rating	Mean	SD
Ability to get things done	A	9.07	1.12
Specialized knowledge required in your field	A	8.77	1.30
Self-reliance	A	8.74	1.27
Work habits	A	8.69	1.29
Ability to get along with others	A	8.68	1.53
Leadership ability	A	8.62	1.31
Organizational ability	A	8.60	1.39
Ability to put orders from superiors into effect	A	8.58	1.44
Common sense	A	8.54	1.42
Intuition	A-	8.34	1.61
Creativity, inventiveness	A-	8.32	1.87
Reading skill	A-	8.28	1.70
Public speaking ability	A-	8.24	1.64
Ability to motivate subordinates	A-	8.18	1.48
Willpower	A-	8.14	2.03
General intelligence	A-	7.92	1.50
Self-confidence	A-	7.89	1.93
Conversational ability	A-	7.89	2.00
Writing skill	A-	7.78	1.97
Ability to make money	B	5.98	2.19

Table 2. Personal characteristics subscale: Means and standard deviations

Personal Characteristics	Mean	SD
I have a strong sense of right and wrong.	9.37	1.47
I care a great deal about other people.	9.21	1.55
I am tolerant of other viewpoints.	8.69	1.54
I am not afraid to be different.	8.41	1.66
I believe in a supreme being.	8.38	2.82
I have a broad range of interests.	8.25	1.79
I am not afraid to take chances or risks.	8.22	1.88
I have well-defined personal goals.	8.12	1.97
I believe that God has a plan for my life.	7.36	3.62
I feel I have a close personal relationship with God.	7.27	3.44
I was just born lucky.	3.82	2.68

very well or fairly well, 92.9% felt they got along with their mothers very well or fairly well.

Reading Habits

Four questions on Gallup and Gallup's "The Great American Success Quotient Test" (1986) deal with reading habits--reading habits in the early years, reading habits in high school, reading habits in college, and adult reading habits. According to data received, 66.4% of the respondents indicated that, before the age of ten, they read much more or somewhat more than other children of that age group, while 19.9% indicated that they read about the same amount as other children. In high school, the situation was much the same, with 65.3% of respondents reporting that they read much more or somewhat more than other students, and 22.4% reporting that they read about the same amount as other students.

At the college level, the differences between the reading habits of survey respondents and other students were not as great. Fifty-four percent of the respondents perceived that they read much more or somewhat more than their peer group, while 34.2% suggested that they read about the same amount as other college students. As adults, NSTOY honorees reported that, in a twelve month period, they read an average of 19.7 fiction books and 10.7 nonfiction books.

It should be noted that Gallup and Gallup's instrument did not provide for collecting data on journal, magazine, and newspaper reading. In a pilot study conducted in 1988, at least one participant suggested that her response did not accurately reflect the amount of reading she does because, although she reads relatively few books, she does a considerable amount of journal, magazine, and newspaper reading. Apparently the question restricts some participants in their attempts to provide an accurate record of their reading habits.

Academics

According to replies, 91.4% of participants reported that their parents felt it was very important or fairly important that their children achieve good grades. Almost 95% of the respondents had one or more teachers who made them enthusiastic about a particular subject, and 63.3% received better grades in some courses than others.

Extracurricular Activities

As high school students, 80.6% of this study's respondents were officers of their classes or other school organizations, and/or were athletic team captains. In college, 50.5% held such leadership positions. The majority of participants also found time for jobs while in school,

with 68.4% having part-time or full-time jobs when in high school and 85.2% having jobs when in college.

Goals and Donations

Although replies suggest that life goals and career goals are fairly clear in the minds of participants, with 76.0% indicating they have clear goals for their lives and 82.7% indicating they have clear goals for their careers, 71.4% reported that there are further life goals they would like to achieve. The data suggest that a goal common to almost all participants is sharing their time and money with service organizations.

As a group, they spend 4.2 hours per week in volunteer activities, contrasted with less than two hours a day in television viewing. In the past twelve months, 98% of survey respondents donated money to charitable causes; 77.6% gave money to religious organizations; 62.8% donated time to helping the poor, disadvantaged, or needy; and 53.1% donated time to religious work. In addition, 75% reported writing letters to political officials or signing petitions.

Factors Contributing to Success

The current study also focused on the factors that NSTOY designees identify as contributing to their success. Respondents indicated how important several factors have been in contributing to their success by rating each factor on a

scale from zero to ten--the higher the number the more important the factor, and the lower the number the less important the factor.

These factors are divided into five subscales: (1) Personal Characteristics or Traits, (2) Experiences in Chosen Field, (3) Academic Experience, (4) Outside (School) Interests, and (5) Family Environment and Influence. They are presented here in rank order, with the subscale receiving the highest composite mean discussed first. Complete listings of the subscales, the rank order of the items in each subscale, subscale means, subscale standard deviations, item means, item standard deviations, and subscale reliabilities are provided in Tables 3-8.

Personal Characteristics or Traits

With an item mean of 8.76, the subscale containing variables related to personal characteristics or traits ranks highest among the five subscales of factors contributing to respondents' success. Caring about other people is the factor with the highest mean (9.61), and being a hard worker has the second highest mean (9.51) of any item on all five subscales. Respondents perceived intelligence (8.11), special talent in a specific area (7.98), and ambition or the desire to get ahead (7.87) as factors contributing the least to their success.

Table 3. Personal characteristics or traits subscale: Means and standard deviations of factors identified as contributing to survey respondents' success in their chosen fields

Personal Characteristics or Traits Subscale Subscale Mean = 96.32; Subscale SD = 8.86		
Variable	Mean	SD
Caring about other people	9.61	0.95
Being a hard worker	9.51	1.00
Not being afraid to pursue new ideas, ventures, take risks	9.26	1.39
Common sense	9.15	1.10
Tolerance of other viewpoints	8.89	1.24
Having a broad range of interests	8.72	1.41
Not being afraid to be different	8.69	1.46
Establishing well-defined personal goals	8.54	1.55
Intelligence	8.11	1.43
Special talent in specific area	7.98	1.75
Ambition, desire to get ahead	7.87	2.16

Table 4. Experiences in chosen field subscale: Means and standard deviations of factors identified as contributing to survey respondents' success in their chosen fields

Experiences in Chosen Field Subscale Mean = 107.98; Subscale SD = 15.25		
Variable	Mean	SD
Ability to get things done	9.42	0.86
Hard work, diligence	9.40	0.94
Respect for peers	8.81	1.29
Organizational ability	8.52	1.57
Special talent in chosen field	8.41	1.72
Ability to motivate subordinates	8.37	1.60
Ability to follow instructions	8.25	1.77
Ambition, desire to get ahead	8.00	2.19
Supportive co-workers	7.62	2.03
Having long-time interest in the field	7.55	2.68
A boss, superiors who assisted or advised	7.25	2.14
Luck, timing, being at the right place at the right time	6.49	2.70
Choosing right field at right time	6.38	2.87
Desire to make money	3.58	2.77

Table 5. Academic experience subscale: Means and standard deviations of factors identified as contributing to survey respondents' success in their chosen fields

Academic Experience Subscale Mean = 82.80; Subscale SD = 12.82		
Variable	Mean	SD
Good work habits, ability to organize time, get things done	9.06	1.23
Desire to excel	8.83	1.46
Working hard at school work	8.63	1.75
Influence and encouragement of teachers	8.27	1.83
Having specific academic goals	7.94	1.96
Having natural learning ability	7.88	1.80
Getting good grades	7.75	1.84
Involvement in extracurricular activities	7.31	2.50
Attending high-quality school(s)	6.74	2.59
Scoring well on achievement tests	6.44	2.42
Involvement in sports	3.91	3.27

Table 6. Outside (school) interests subscale: Means and standard deviations of factors identified as contributing to survey respondents' success in their chosen fields

Outside (School) Interests Subscale Mean = 14.61; Subscale SD = 3.85		
Variable	Mean	SD
Having a broad range of interests (outside school)	7.98	1.96
Having outside jobs, summer work, etc.	6.62	2.72

Table 7. Family environment and influence subscale: Means and standard deviations of factors identified as contributing to survey respondents' success in their chosen fields

Family Environment and Influence Subscale Mean = 51.40; Subscale SD = 14.00		
Variable	Mean	SD
Strong support of parents	7.98	2.37
Happiness of home life	7.67	2.34
Physical environment or habitat when young	7.40	2.06
Strong support of other family members	7.35	2.56
Strong religious upbringing	6.57	3.06
Important personal contacts	5.78	2.76
National ancestry, parents' ancestors, nationality	4.63	3.01
Material advantages, money, property	4.09	2.30

Table 8. Gallup and Gallup subscale reliabilities

Subscale	No. of Items	Alpha
Personal Characteristics or Traits	11	.79
Experiences in Chosen Field	14	.81
Academic Experience	11	.80
Outside (School) Interests	2	.50
Family Environment and Influence	8	.84

Experiences in Chosen Field

The next highest ranking subscale (Item Mean = 7.71) is topped by the ability to get things done, which has a mean rating of 9.42, and it is followed closely by hard work (9.40). The lowest rated items on the fourteen item subscale are the desire to make money (3.58), choosing the right field at the right time (6.38), and luck (6.49).

Academic Experiences

Good work habits (9.06), the desire to excel (8.83), and working hard at school (8.63) lead the eleven factors which comprise the Academic Experiences subscale (Item Mean = 7.53). Scoring well on achievement tests (6.44) managed only a tenth place ranking, and involvement in sports (3.91) placed last on the eleven item subscale.

Outside (School) Interests

The fourth ranking subscale (Item Mean = 7.30) contains only two items. Respondents reported that, on a scale of zero to ten, having outside jobs and summer work rated a 6.62 level of importance, and having a broad range of interests outside of school rated a 7.98 level of importance in contributing to their success. However, because the Outside (School) Interests subscale has a standardized item alpha of

only .50, any interpretations based on the results of this subscale should be viewed with caution.

Family Environment and Influence

As a subscale, items related to family environment and family influence received the lowest item mean rating (6.42) as factors respondents perceived as contributing to their success in their chosen fields. At this point it is interesting to recall that survey participants overwhelmingly reported having happy childhoods and good relationships with their parents.

Strong parental support (7.98) and happiness of home life (7.98) rank highest on the eight item Family Environment and Influence subscale. Ancestry or nationality (4.63) and material advantages, such as money and property (4.09), rank lowest.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey analyses indicate that NSTOY recipients can, in fact, identify the factors which they feel contributed to their success. Viewing the subscale means for "The Great American Success Quotient Test," the results of the current study create a profile similar in many ways to that found in Jensen's 1988 study. As conclusions pertaining to each research question are summarized below, comparisons between the current study and the 1988 study are drawn.

Characteristics

Of the 196 NSTOY honorees who completed and returned surveys, 76.8% hold master's degrees or have completed work beyond the master's level. Although 34.7% of the respondents have retired, all but 2% of those who have not yet retired remain involved in education in a variety of ways, which range from K-12 teachers, to administrators, to student teacher supervisors.

NSTOY honorees reported that they possess a strong sense of right and wrong and a high degree of organizational and leadership abilities. They also demonstrate the ability to: get things done, care a great deal about other people, tolerate other viewpoints, and get along well with others. These high achievers exhibit the good work habits, self-reliance, and specialized knowledge that enable them to experience success in their chosen fields. However, they made it very clear that luck has little or nothing to do with their success. Rather, they tend to be goal-directed individuals who report having further life goals to attain.

Finally, NSTOY honorees demonstrate a clear pattern of philanthropic activity. They give both of their time and their money to charitable causes and religious organizations.

The participants in Jensen's 1988 study share many of these same characteristics. However, one of the most notable

differences can be found in the gender distribution of the subjects. In the 1988 study, 69 of the 107 participants are male and 38 are female. In the NSTOY study, 150 of the 196 participants are female and 45 are male (one case of missing data). The fact that almost two-thirds of the respondents in one study are male and over three-quarters of the respondents in the other study are female may account for some of the differences in the studies' results.

A second notable demographic difference is apparent in the almost 20 year disparity in the average ages of the two studies' subjects. The fact that, as a group, NSTOY honorees are much older than the 1988 study participants and that slightly over one-third of them are retired constitutes another plausible source of some of the variation in the results of the two studies.

In terms of the characteristics they possess, responses from NSTOY honorees and 1988 respondents are quite similar. However, on many variables, NSTOY respondents tended to rate themselves higher than Jensen's respondents rated themselves. For example, on the self-appraisal subscale, NSTOY honorees rated their ability to put orders from superiors into effect as their eighth strongest characteristic of 20, while the 1988 study participants rated this same characteristic as

their seventh strongest trait. However, NSTOY respondents' mean rating for this item is 8.58, while the 1988 respondents' corresponding mean rating is only 8.26.

Developmental Patterns

The majority of both NSTOY respondents and participants in the 1988 study enjoyed happy childhoods and positive relationships with their parents--parents who felt it was important that their children achieve good grades. In fact, most of those children did fare well in school, although they tended to earn higher grades in some courses than in others.

While in high school and college, respondents in both studies apparently were successful at balancing academics and extracurricular activities. They reported high levels of involvement in leadership positions, as well as high levels of academic achievement, and the majority of them held part-time or full-time jobs. In addition, almost all of the respondents were fortunate enough to have one or more teachers whose influence caused them to be enthusiastic about learning.

About two-thirds of the NSTOY honorees recalled reading more than their peers, both at the elementary and secondary levels. In college, this number decreased to slightly more

than half of the respondents, while slightly more than half of the participants in Jensen's study reported reading more than their peers in elementary and secondary school, and, at the college level, only one-third of them read more than their peer group.

As adults, NSTOY respondents continue to be more avid readers than the 1988 respondents, with NSTOY honorees reading almost three times as many books per month as the subjects in Jensen's study. The fact that slightly over one-third of the NSTOY respondents are retired may account for some of this variation, although NSTOY respondents demonstrate a clear pattern of reading more than the 1988 study participants throughout their lives.

Factors Contributing to Success

The data collected suggest that, first and foremost, NSTOY designees attribute their success to caring about other people. Variables relating to hard work, organizational ability, good work habits, and the respondents' ability to get things done rank second highest as factors contributing to their success. Other factors which they identified as highly significant in contributing to their success include risk taking and common sense.

Quite predictably, the variable which NSTOY respondents rated lowest in contributing to their success is the desire to make money. Other factors which respondents saw as contributing little to their success include: involvement in sports, material advantages, ancestry, and important personal contacts.

NSTOY honorees' responses created the following ranking of Gallup and Gallup's five subscales of factors contributing to their success: Personal Characteristics or Traits, Experiences in Chosen Field, Academic Experience, Outside (School) Interests, and Family Environment and Influence. The responses of participants in Jensen's 1988 study vary slightly from the NSTOY responses, with the Academic Experience and Outside (School) Interests scales reversing positions. However, given the low standardized item alpha (.50) of the Outside (School) Interests subscale, little should be made of this matter.

It is interesting to note that, while respondents in both studies did not view earning high grades and scoring well on achievement tests as particularly significant in contributing to their success, their parents felt earning high grades was important. A similar incongruity exists in the area of family environment, which again the studies'

respondents did not perceive as contributing significantly to their success, even though they disclosed that their childhoods were happy and their relationships with their parents were positive.

Summary

The fact that there are far more commonalities than differences between the responses of NSTOY designees and the responses of participants in the 1988 study, very few of whom were teachers, suggests that the two groups are more similar than dissimilar with regard to the developmental patterns and characteristics that led to their success. Consequently, this conclusion lends credibility to the notion that the research of those who have studied successful individuals from other fields (Gallup & Gallup, 1986; Garfield, 1986) has relevance to the field of education and to the study of exemplary teachers.

The portrait of NSTOY honorees as caring, hard working, self-reliant achievers who possess a strong sense of right and wrong, as well as a high degree of specialized knowledge in their chosen field, does, in fact, closely parallel Garfield's (1986) portrait of peak performers and Jensen's (1988) portrait of successful young adults. While survey respondents display common sense and a modicum of

intelligence, they tend to value process skills and affective components more highly than general intelligence, as factors contributing to their success. Although a certain degree of innate ability seems to be a prerequisite to success, it certainly does not guarantee success. Quite simply, people, who over an extended period of time consistently exhibit superior performance in a chosen field or endeavor, do so as a result of diligence, time on task, perseverance, and the motivation to succeed.

Other individuals who fail to reach comparable levels of success may be just as intelligent and just as talented, but they have not applied their skills or, as Garfield (1986) would say, leveraged their abilities to achieve maximum productivity. Perhaps the less successful have not yet recognized that the differences between peak performers and themselves are much smaller than they think. Possibly, they have not realized the important roles that affective components and process skills play in the success of peak performers.

Educational Significance

How can profiles of effective teachers be utilized in preparing future teachers? Attempting to identify how effective past and present teachers attained their success

constitutes an important first step in attempting to repeatedly and consistently replicate their success. For that reason, of special interest in the NSTOY study are the results of the Personal Characteristics or Traits, Academic Experience, Experiences in Chosen Field, and Self Appraisal subscales.

These particular subscales contain variables which can be categorized as skills and attitudes, and, according to Garfield (1986), they can be learned or acquired. Therefore, it seems logical to pay particular attention to variables which are alterable (e.g., good work habits, organizational ability, willingness to take risks), rather than to variables which are outside the individual's control (e.g., support of parents, childhood environment, material advantages).

However, once a composite or profile of those variables which contribute to the success of effective teachers is compiled, the real challenge begins. That challenge lies in transferring the identified composite of skills and traits into attainable teacher education curriculum components. This is not to suggest that teacher educators should develop specific courses on how to be a peak performer, rather that teacher educators might develop an organized program of courses which systematically requires or allows preservice

teachers to acquire and practice the skills and attitudes of peak performers. That is, if risk taking, self-reliance, and leadership are variables associated with peak performers, they should also be desirable outcomes of teacher preparation programs.

Consequently, it seems logical to conclude that teacher candidates might benefit from participation in preparation programs which provide ample opportunities for them to acquire the skills and qualities of peak performers. If teacher educators cannot adequately facilitate and enhance the development of preservice teachers as peak performers, can they at least get out of the way? If they cannot help, at the very least they should not hinder.

Recommendations for Further Study

A study which drew from a data base of 390 individuals recognized for their outstanding teaching certainly can contribute to the identification of factors associated with such success. However, it serves as only the first step in a process that also must include: (1) compiling a replicable composite or profile of those variables which consistently contribute to the success of effective teachers, (2) transferring the identified composite of skills and traits into attainable teacher education curriculum components, and

(3) validating the effectiveness of such attempts through program evaluation. Obviously, these steps require the considerable attention of teacher educators, as well as further study.

Meeting the challenges outlined above could also lead to the creation of a ready-made advocacy group, intent on infusing the peak performer characteristics, skills, and qualities, which Garfield (1986) and Gallup and Gallup (1986) delineate, into the K-12 curriculum. Such curriculum reform efforts would bring with them the potential for helping more students become successful adults who are capable of making significant contributions to society.

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